

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 071253Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4555
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IN
SUBJECT: JANATA AND CONGRESS AGREE ON SANJIVA REDDY AS
CONSENSUS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

1. SAMACHAR REPORTS THIS AFRTERNOON (JULY 7) THAT THE
CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARDS OF THE JANATA AND CONGRESS
PARTIES SEPARATELY APPROVED THE CANDIDACY OF LOK SABHA
SPEAKER N. SANJIVA REDDI IN THE AUGUST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.
THE ANNNOUNCEMENT APPEARS TO ENSURE HIS VICTORY AND ENDS
MONTHS OF SPECULATION AND SEVERAL WEEKS OF JANATA/CONGRESS
CONSULTATION ON THE PROBABLE IDENTITY OF THE MAIN CONTESTANT
IN THE RACE. REDDI'S NAME HAS FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE
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SPECULATION ALMOST FROM THE OUTSET IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT HE
IS THE MOST PROMINENT JANATA FIGURE FROM THE SOUTH AND THE
FEELING THAT AS PRESIDENT HE WOULD GIVE BALANCE TO A
GOVERNMENT OVERWHELMINGLY DOMINATED BY NORTHERNERS.

2. THE PRESIDENTIAL SWEEPSTAKES HAVE KEPT DELHI'S RUMOR MILLS
FULLY OCCUPIED FOR MONTHS, WITH NAMES OF THE LIKELY JANATA

CANDIDATE ENJOYING BRIEF NOTORIETY BEFORE DISAPPEARING FROM THE SCENE. AT ONE POINT, DEFENSE MINISTER (AND LEADER OF THE ERSTWHILE CFD) JAGJIVAN RAM WAS WIDELY RUMORED AS THE PARTY'S CHOICE AND THAT HE WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE CONGRESS AS WELL. ACCORDING TO SOME OF OUR SOURCES, RAM WAS INDEED APPROACHED BUT DECLINED THE OFFER IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT A TERM AS PRESIDENT WOULD EFFECTIVELY REMOVE HIM FROM THE POLITICAL ARENA FOR FIVE YEARS. IN RECENT DAYS, THE NAME OF MRS. RUKMINI ARUNDALE, A THEOSOPHIST AND LEADING TEACHER OF INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCING, FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE SPECULATION, PARTICULARLY AFTER SANJIVA REDDI DECLARED THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT THE NOMINATION ONLY AS THE UNANIMOUS CANDIDATE OF ALL THE PARTIES.

3. THE APPROVAL OF REDDI'S CANDIDACY COMES AS NO GREAT SURPRISE TO OBSERVERS HERE NOR DOES THE FACT THAT HE IS THE CONSENSUS CANDIDATE OF THE TWO MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES. THE JANATA SWEEP IN THE JUNE STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS VIRTUALLY ASSURED THE JANATA THAT IT COULD ELECT ITS CANDIDATE AS PRESIDENT ON ITS OWN. EVEN PRIOR TO THE ASSEMBLY POLL, HOWEVER, JANATA LEADERS HAD BEEN TALKING ABOUT WISDOM OF HAVING A CONSENSUS, COMPRISE CANDIDATE WHO WOULD ENJOY THE SUPPORT OF ALL MAJOR PARTIES. PRIME MINISTER DESAI AND JANATA PRESIDENT CHANDRA SHEKHAR INITIATED A DIALOGUE WITH LEADERS OF THE MAJOR PARTIES TO THIS END AND THE PM REPORTEDLY MET SEVERAL TIMES WITH THE LEADER OF THE CONGRESS OPPOSITION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN THE LOK SABHA, Y. B. CHAVAN. AS A RESULT OF THESE CONSULTATIONS, THE LEADERS OF SEVERAL PARTIES (INCLUDING THE CONGRESS, AIADMK AND AKALI DAL) ANNOUNCED THAT THEIR PARTIES WOULD SUPPORT THE JANATA CANDIDATE.

4. WITH CONGRESS SUPPORT NOW PLEDGED AND MOST OTHER PARTIES LIKELY TO FALL IN LINE, REDDI'S ELECTION (BALLOTING WILL BE HELD ON AUGUST 6) APPEARS TO BE ASSURED. IN A SENSE, HIS CANDIDACY AND PROBABLE VICTORY REPRESENTS THE FULL TURNING TO THE WHEEL IN INDIAN POLITICS. IN 1969, THE SO-CALLED SYNDICATE OF CONGRESS PARTY BOSSES HAD PUT UP REDDI AS THE "OFFICIAL" CONGRESS CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT. IN AN ATTEMPT TO REDUCE THE POWER OF THESE BOSSES, WHO WERE BITTERLY OPPOSED TO HER, MRS. GANDHI THREW HER SUPPORT BEHIND V. V. GIRI AND URGED HER FOLLOWERS TO DO LIKEWISE. GIRI WON THE ELECTION, MRS. GANDHI WON THE TEST OF STRENGTH, AND THE PARTY SPLIT. SOME JANATA MP'S HAVE TOLD US THAT IT IS ONLY FAIR AND PROPER THAT REDDI SHOULD GET THE NOMINATION; AS ONE REMARKED TO AN EMBOFF: "AFTER WHAT MRS. GANDHI DID TO HIM IN 1969, WE OWE IT TO REDDI TO GIVE HIM THE PRESIDENCY." GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, NOMINATION
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Sent Date: 07-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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